



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/501,713	07/19/2004	Volker Hennige	254659US0XPCT	4451
22850 7590 10/10/2007 OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			EXAMINER COLE, ELIZABETH M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1794	
			NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			10/10/2007	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

patentdocket@oblon.com
oblonpat@oblon.com
jgardner@oblon.com

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/501,713	Applicant(s) HENNIGE ET AL.	
	Examiner Elizabeth M. Cole	Art Unit 1794	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 August 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-12,14-28 and 30-45 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3-12, 14-28, 30-45 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Art Unit: 1794

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 1/18/07 has been entered.

1. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

2. Claims 1, 3-12, 14-28, 30-40 were previously rejected on the grounds of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting over 10/487,245, (erroneously cited as '0/487,145). This rejection is withdrawn in view of the amendment since the claims of '245 are drawn to substrates comprising glass fibers and no motivation is currently found to employ glass fibers in combination with the adhesion promoter of Guiver.

3. Claims 1, 3-12, 14-28, 30-40 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-36 of copending Application No. 10/504,144, in view of Guiver et al, US Patent Application Publication 20020062737. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each discloses a membrane comprising a fibrous substrate and a permeable ceramic coating. US '144 does not set forth the claimed adhesion promoter. Guiver et al teaches employing the claimed adhesion promoters in order to promote adhesion between a polymeric substrate and an inorganic coating. See abstract. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have employed an adhesion promoter as taught by Guiver with the claimed invention of US '144, motivated by the expectation that this would improve the adhesion of the coating to the substrate.

4. This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

5. Claims 1, 3-12, 14-28, 30-40 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-25 of copending Application No. 10/524,143, in view of Guiver et al, US Patent Application Publication 20020062737. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each claims a membrane comprising a fibrous substrate and a permeable ceramic coating. U.S. '143 does not set forth the claimed adhesion promoter. Guiver et al teaches employing the claimed adhesion promoters in order to promote adhesion between a polymeric substrate and an

Art Unit: 1794

inorganic coating. See abstract. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have employed an adhesion promoter as taught by Guiver with the claimed invention of US '143, motivated by the expectation that this would improve the adhesion of the coating to the substrate.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

6. Claims 1, 3-12, 14-28, 30-40 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-25 of copending Application No. 10/524,669 in view of Guiver et al, US Patent Application Publication 20020062737. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each claims a membrane comprising a fibrous substrate and a permeable ceramic coating. US '669 does not set forth the claimed adhesion promoter. Guiver et al teaches employing the claimed adhesion promoters in order to promote adhesion between a polymeric substrate and an inorganic coating. See abstract. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have employed an adhesion promoter as taught by Guiver with the claimed invention of US '669, motivated by the expectation that this would improve the adhesion of the coating to the substrate.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

7. Claims 1, 3-12, 14-28, 30-40 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-24

Art Unit: 1794

of copending Application No. 10/519,097 in view of Guiver et al, US Patent Application Publication 20020062737. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each claims a permeable membrane comprising a fibrous substrate and a permeable ceramic coating. US '097 does not set forth the claimed adhesion promoter. Guiver et al teaches employing the claimed adhesion promoters in order to promote adhesion between a polymeric substrate and an inorganic coating. See abstract. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have employed an adhesion promoter as taught by Guiver with the claimed invention of US '097, motivated by the expectation that this would improve the adhesion of the coating to the substrate.

8.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

9. Claims 1, 3-12, 14-28, 30-40 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-29 of copending Application No. 10/575,268 in view of Guiver et al, US Patent Application Publication 20020062737. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each discloses a membrane comprising a fibrous substrate and a permeable ceramic coating. US '268 does not set forth the claimed adhesion promoter. Guiver et al teaches employing the claimed adhesion promoters in order to promote adhesion between a polymeric substrate and an inorganic coating. See abstract. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of

ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have employed an adhesion promoter as taught by Guiver with the claimed invention of US '268, motivated by the expectation that this would improve the adhesion of the coating to the substrate

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

10. Claims 1, 3-12, 14-28, 30-40 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-24 of copending Application No. 10/575,759 in view of Guiver et al, US Patent Application Publication 20020062737. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each claims a membrane comprising a fibrous substrate and a permeable ceramic coating. US '759 does not set forth the claimed adhesion promoter. Guiver et al teaches employing the claimed adhesion promoters in order to promote adhesion between a polymeric substrate and an inorganic coating. See abstract. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have employed an adhesion promoter as taught by Guiver with the claimed invention of US '759, motivated by the expectation that this would improve the adhesion of the coating to the substrate

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

11. Claims 1, 3-12, 14-28, 30-40 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 22-42 of copending Application No. 10/575,734 in view of Guiver et al, US Patent

Application Publication 20020062737. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each discloses a membrane comprising a fibrous substrate and a permeable ceramic coating. US '734 does not set forth the claimed adhesion promoter. Guiver et al teaches employing the claimed adhesion promoters in order to promote adhesion between a polymeric substrate and an inorganic coating. See abstract. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have employed an adhesion promoter as taught by Guiver with the claimed invention of US '734, motivated by the expectation that this would improve the adhesion of the coating to the substrate

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

12. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

13. Claims 1, 3-12, 14-28, 30-31, 33,39-40, 41, 42, 45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Penth et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,309,545 in view of Guiver et al, US Patent Application Publication 20020062737. Penth discloses a permeable composite material comprising a fibrous substrate which may be formed from natural or synthetic fibers having a coating disposed thereon. See col. 3, lines 61- col. 4, line 10. The synthetic fibers can be polyamide. The total thickness of the

Art Unit: 1794

composite material may be 5-150 micrometers. See claim 62. The fibrous substrate can comprise pores or openings having a size of 0.02-500 micrometers which correspond to a minimum value of 20 nm which is within the claimed range. See col. 3, lines 39-60. The coating can comprise metal oxides including those claimed. See col. 6, lines 21-43. The coating can be applied by stamping, pressing, rolling, blade or a brushing, dipping, spraying or pouring. See col. 5, lines 32-36. The inorganic material can comprise a sol comprising the metalloid oxide sol. See col. 5, lines 48-53. The membrane can be bent to a radius of 1 mm without breaking. See col. 2, lines 55-60. The sols are obtained by hydrolyzing at least one metallic compound, at least one metalloid compound or at least one composition metallic compound. It is advantageous to carry out the hydrolysis of the compounds to hydrolyzed with at least half the mol. ratio water, water vapor or ice in relation to the hydrolysable group of the hydrolysable compound. The hydrolyzed compound can be treated with at least one organic or inorganic acid. Preferably the percentage by mass of the suspended component should be 0.1 to 500 times the hydrolyzed compound used. The suspension consisting of sol and compounds to be suspended preferably has a ratio of sol to compounds to be suspended of 0.1: 100 to 100: 0.1. See col. 5, line 54 0 col. 6, line 65. Penth differs from the claimed invention because it does not disclose the claimed porosity or fiber diameters. However, since Penth teaches employing a porous substrate, and teaches that the porosity of the material can be controlled, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have selected the particular porosity and pore size which produced a membrane having the desired

porosity. Since the size of the fibers would be related to the size of the pores, it further would have been obvious to have selected the fiber size through the process of routine experimentation which produced a material having the desired porosity.

Penth differs from the claimed invention because Penth does not disclose the use of adhesion promoters to bond the coating to the fibrous substrate. Guiver et al teaches employing the claimed adhesion promoters in order to promote adhesion between a polymeric substrate and an inorganic coating. See abstract. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have employed an adhesion promoter as taught by Guiver in the invention of Penth, motivated by the expectation that this would improve the adhesion of the coating to the substrate. As to new claims 41, 42, 45, Penth teaches one or more further coatings can be applied such as an inorganic or ceramic layer. See col. 7, lines 56-col. 8, line 16. With regard to the limitation that an adhesion promoter is present, since Guiver teaches including an adhesion promoter to facilitate bonding, it would have been obvious to do so, with the expectation that the adhesion promoter would further facilitate bonding between the components.

14. Claims 43 and 44 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Penth in view of Guiver as applied to claims above, and further in view of Silane Coupling Agents, pages 31-32 and 153. Although Guiver teaches the use of silane coupling agents, it does not teach the specifically claimed silane coupling agents. "Silane Coupling Agents", page 153 teaches using conventionally known silane coupling agents to facilitate bonding between ceramics and other components. "Silane Coupling

Agents”, pages 31-32 teach the claimed silane coupling agents as being conventionally used. See table 2.1. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have employed the particularly claimed silane coupling agents to facilitate bonding in the invention of Penth, motivated by the teaching of Silane Coupling Agents of their suitability for this purpose. .

15. Claims 32,34-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Penth in view of Guiver as applied to claims above, and further in view of Sassa et al, U.S. patent No. 5,324,579. Penth differs from the claimed invention because while Penth teaches that the fibers may be “plastic” fibers generally, and teaches polyamide fibers specifically, Penth does not disclose the other particularly claimed fibers. Sassa et al teaches that fibers such as PTFE, may be combined with other types of synthetic plastic fibers including polyesters, polyamide, polyolefins, polyimide and polyacrylonitrile fibers in order to form substrates which are used to form filter materials. See col. 5, line 56-col. 6, line 56. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have employed the polymeric fiber materials disclosed in Sassa in the invention of Penth, motivated by the teaching of Sassa that the other polymeric fibers were recognized in the art as equivalent to the polyamide fibers specifically taught by Penth and also because of the art recognized suitability of such fibers for the purpose of making substrates for filtration.

16. Applicant's arguments filed 1/18/07 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant argues that Penth only discloses nonwoven materials in fleece

Art Unit: 1794

form with regard to natural fibers or metallic fibers, but does not disclose a nonwoven made from synthetic fibers, such as those claimed. However, Penth teaches glued, felted or fibers which are bound by a ceramic material at col. 3. Further, Penth teaches that the fibers can comprise polyamide fibers. See col. 3, line 67. Therefore, Penth does teach nonwovens comprising plastic fibers such as polyamide fibers.

Applicant argues that Guiver does not disclose using the adhesion promoter in combination with the claimed polymer fibers. However, Guiver does teach that employing an adhesion promoter enhances bonding between polymeric substrates and inorganic coatings, and therefore, the person of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to employ the known adhesion promoter of Guiver for its known purpose of promoting adhesion between a polymeric substrate such as those taught in Penth and an inorganic coating.

17. Applicant's arguments filed 8/3/07 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant argues that Guiver only teaches the adhesion promoter for use with the particular coatings disclosed in Guiver. However, this argument is not persuasive because silane coupling agents are generally known in the art as adhesion promoters which are useful in facilitating bonding between polymeric substrates and inorganic coatings. For example, see "Silane Coupling Agents" chapter 6, page 153. While Guiver et al teaches a particular mechanism by which adhesion is promoted, Guiver also teaches the use of a silane coupling agent which is known in the art for the intended purpose of facilitating bonding. Therefore, all the claimed elements are known in the art and could be combined by known methods and upon combination, each

element would retain its function. Therefore, the combination of the known elements taught by Penth with the known adhesion promoter taught by Guiver by known methods would yield the predictable result of improved adhesion and therefore the combination is *prima facie* obvious.

18. Applicant argues that Guiver teaches that the improved adhesion is due to the aldehyde-containing polysulfone. However, Guiver teaches that the silane acts as the coupling agent, not the polysulfone.

19. Applicant argues that the office has provided no explanation of why the polymeric materials of claim 1 would be considered to include the aldehyde group required by the disclosure of Guiver. However, as set forth above, Guiver teaches employing an adhesion promoting silane coupling agent to promote adhesion between an inorganic coating and a polymeric material. Further, as established by the citation of "Silane Coupling Agents", silane coupling agents such as the aminofunctional methoxysilane taught by Guiver were known in the art to be coupling agents which are suitable for use in improving adhesion between ceramics and other materials.

Therefore, the teaching of Guiver is not limited to the particular materials shown since, as shown in Guiver at paragraph 0017, the silane used was a known coupling agents. Silane coupling agents per se are known to facilitate bonding of ceramics. Therefore, the rejection is maintained.

20. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Elizabeth M. Cole whose telephone number is (571) 272-1475. The examiner may be reached between 6:30 AM and 6:00 PM Monday through Wednesday, and 6:30 AM and 2 PM on Thursday.

Mr. Terrel Morris, the examiner's supervisor, may be reached at (571) 272-1478.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

The fax number for all official faxes is (571) 273-8300.

/Elizabeth M. Cole/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1771

e.m.c